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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 003259

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. ELECTION; TAIWAN ARMS  
PROCUREMENT

A) "Will Bush Change His Diplomatic Policies If Re-elected?"

The "International Watch" column of the pro-status quo  
"China Times" said (10/19):

"Almost all the countries of the whole world, except Israel, are not satisfied with the Bush administration's foreign policies and practices. Then, if Bush gets re-elected, will he change his foreign policies?"

"There are two entirely different viewpoints. Some believe he will readjust his policies in accordance with developments in the global situation. Others think, since U.S. voters do not oppose the policies, why does Bush need to change them?"

"Judging from Bush's actions during the presidential campaign, there seem to be no signs of change. He does not regret using military force in all places and still plans to promote "U.S.-style freedom and democracy" with military force as one option. He does not show any concessions to those countries that oppose U.S. attacks in Iraq. There are, however, other messages that should not be ignored. One foreign policy advisor to Bush's father, . Brent Scowcroft, recently suggested to [George W. Bush] that he should follow friendlier and more cooperative policies in his second term."

B) "Some Thoughts on the U.S. Election"

Commentator Paul Lin noted in the pro-independence,  
English-language "Taipei Times" (10/19):

". Both China and Taiwan are paying close attention to the U.S. presidential election. Although the Chinese government outwardly remains neutral, public opinion is clearly on Kerry's side because his cross-strait policy does not mention the Taiwan Relations Act that so displeases China, and because once, in a slip of the tongue, he supported a solution of the Taiwan issue within China's 'one country, two systems' framework. China therefore has better expectations of Kerry."

"Two months ago, there was some information saying that Chinese President Hu Jintao would visit the U.S. this month. After the information was leaked, it then appeared that U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was paving the way for such a visit when she visited Beijing. If Hu does visit the U.S. this month, it will be interpreted as support for Bush. Maybe because Beijing is asking too high a price for such a visit, it now seems it will not take place. Instead, the 80/20 Committee, which enjoys a good relationship with Beijing, is urging ethnic Chinese to vote for the Democratic candidate

"Although Taiwan remains neutral, there must be questions concerning Kerry's remarks. Presidential advisor Koo Kuan-min's recent ads in the New York Times and the Washington Post requesting that the U.S. review its 'one China' policy were quickly rejected by the U.S. government in a clear attempt to avoid having external factors affect the presidential election campaign. The 'one China' policy issue, however, is not only an issue when deciding whom to vote for -- it is also an issue that the next U.S. president should resolve."

C) "Arms Deal Does Not Equal Security"

C.V. Chen, a senior partner at the law firm Lee and Li, commented in the pro-independence, English-language  
"Taipei Times" (10/19):

"U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless has said that if Taiwan's legislature does not pass the arms procurement plan, it will only prove that Taiwanese democracy has not yet reached a level where

national security concerns override party politics, and that Taiwan would be seen as a liability, not a partner, by its friends in the international community.

"I can sympathize with Lawless' defense of U.S. and Taiwanese interests, but as the bill will be picked up by the Taiwanese taxpayer, we need to further consider his comments.

". [W]ill the U.S. and `other countries' doubt Taiwan's defense promises? I am curious to know what countries, apart from the U.S., are concerned about Taiwan's security. Lawless' statement instead highlights the fact that a joint defense treaty no longer exists between Taiwan and the U.S., and that the US according to international law has no obligation to defend Taiwan.

".[D]oes opposition to the arms procurement plan mean telling Beijing that its threats are effective? On the contrary, I feel that defending the NT\$600 billion arms procurement plan out of fear is tantamount to telling Beijing that threats are effective indeed. If China spends one dollar to build missiles, Taiwan has to spend four dollars to buy anti-missile equipment. Is there any more efficient threat than that? And Lawless' statement is also intended as a threat, using Beijing to pressure Taiwan into buying U.S. arms. If the people of Taiwan are not brave enough to say no to unreasonable behavior, then such threats will only increase.

". Finally, the question of whether or not the NT\$600 billion arms procurement plan will be carried out will be symbolic of domestic democratic development and an opportunity to transcend the differences between the proponents of independence and unification, and members of the blue and green camps. It is crucial to whether the Taiwanese people will be able to leave behind the ideologies that have hijacked our politicians. Let us work together and say no to the double threat from Beijing and the U.S."

PAAL